

Health Fair ...from Page 1A

Dozens of volunteers, from hospital staff to vendors spreading the local love of health, will be present for the health fair, including those with the Hospital Auxiliary.

"It's an amazing opportunity for this community to have this type of a Health Fair," said Ryan Snow, who came on board as assistant administrator to the hospital in January. "You can look around in many different facilities, settings, and they don't offer the types of screenings and services that this Health Fair

offers.

"This is top notch with any other hospital system as far as offering screenings, and I've seen a bunch, everything from participating in the one that they offer for Johnson & Johnson's employees down at Gainesville, to different things offered at other hospitals."

Aside from the Health Fair, Snow is excited to be working with his colleagues at the hospital. He's only been in town for going on five months, but already he said he sees the real communal value of

Chatuge Regional.

"They have a good understanding of what the needs are in this community, and do an excellent job providing services that meet those needs," said Snow of Chatuge health care professionals. "I'm proud to be a part of this hospital system."

For carotid ultrasounds and bone density scans, call the hospital at (706) 896-7170 to make an appointment before Saturday.

Residents can pre-

register for certain parts of the Health Fair every day leading up to the day of the fair, though a majority of the medical tests and vendors will be available on a walk-in basis.

Results of blood work can be expected via mail about two weeks after the fair.

Chatuge Regional Hospital Chief Nursing Officer Machelleva Lovell, Hospital Marketing Director Lindsey Townsend and Hospital Case Manager Kathy Kitchens also contributed to this report.

Clean Sweep ...from Page 1A

2013 as an effort to gather excitement for the area clean up by resident volunteers and help in keeping Towns County litter free.

"Four years ago, I decided we needed to do a countywide clean up," said Howard. "We had a limited success that year. I was so discouraged after that first year from lack of participation.

"But there was an individual that said if I did it the next year he would help me and that was Dr. (Vernon) Dixon. So, the next year it was Grace and Vernon. As a result of that, he got very involved with the churches and was able to move some people in our direction and that's how we met J.C. Berrong."

This year, Howard has passed the torch to J.C. Berrong to organize the cleanup and both Berrong and Howard's efforts have paid off with more than 200 bags of trash gathered throughout the week. According to Howard, under Berrong's leadership the county has never looked better.

"We had a wonderful time out picking up trash," said Berrong. "It was difficult



Dr. Dixon picked up more trash during Clean Sweep Week 2017 than any other individual. Photo/Lily Avery

in many instances but we had a lot of fun. It was great to see all the children and young folks come out and participate. We had more people actively involved this year than we did last year."

To congratulate the dozens of volunteers and continue to encourage the annual clean up, Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw sponsored the banquet by providing pizza, cookies and drinks for volunteers to enjoy that evening.

During the ceremony, volunteers were asked to share some of the most interesting trash items they picked up throughout the week. While the usual fast food bags and Styrofoam cups were found, one volunteer stumbled upon a kettle pot while another came across half of a car bumper with a license plate still attached.

All trash aside, many deserving individuals were recognized throughout the evening. Commissioner Bradshaw awarded a Volunteer of the Year Award to a commendable resident who has gone above and beyond to make Towns County beautiful – J.C. Berrong.

"This is so important for our county," said Commissioner Bradshaw. "We don't want to live in a trashy county. We want it to be clean. Nobody wants to look at garbage.

"We always give an award to someone who has gone above and beyond. A lot of the volunteers have done this and done a lot of work and I thank you for that.

"This year, I want to present this to someone for taking the lead and working so hard and making sure everything is taken care of and going above and beyond to make sure this goes smoothly.

"J.C., this is well deserved. Thank you."

In addition to the Volunteer of the Year Award, awards for Clean Sweep Week participants were presented. Each year, three awards are given to the church, individual and organization that collect the most bags within the respective categories.

This year McConnell Memorial Baptist Church received the award with 90 total bags, Dr. Dixon won the individual category with 30 bags and Towns County Schools received the organization award with 29 total bags collected.

Sponsors for this year's Towns County Clean Sweep Week are the Towns County Commissioner's Office, Towns County Chamber of Commerce, Towns County Homeowners Association and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Rep. Gurtler holds town halls to catch up with constituents

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – Questions concerning the annual budget, no votes and new legislation were the highlights of House District 8 State Rep. Matt Gurtler's recent visit to Young Harris College for a town hall meeting on Thursday, April 27.

Rep. Gurtler recently wrapped up his freshman year at the Georgia House of Representatives, instantly making a name for himself among both his constituents and his colleagues in the legislature.

During last Thursday's talk, Rep. Gurtler shared insights with area constituents concerning his voting habits during session and why he felt these were reflective of his district, as well as the bills he strongly supported over the last few months.

Of the many bills that passed through the Georgia legislature during the 2017 General Assembly, one of concern to voters not only in the 8th District but also all across the state was the annual state budget.

When the budget went for a vote, Rep. Gurtler was the only "no" vote in the house, something that caused quite a stir in Atlanta. However, according to Rep. Gurtler, he felt it would be an injustice to his district if he voted "yes" to a budget that he felt used millions of taxpayer dollars without caution or care.

"This year, I was the only one to vote against the budget," said Rep. Gurtler. "I didn't agree with about \$86.5 million in the small budget.

"Georgia has a small budget and a big budget. The small budget is the leftover money that they have. Basically, there is more revenue raised than they



District 8 State Rep. Matt Gurtler

thought would be the previous year.

"There was a surplus of about \$606 million this time and about \$86.5 million of that was through subsidies. I didn't agree with that, fundamentally.

"I don't think that's the proper role of government, to meddle in the private sector, to interfere with businesses and to create this artificial competition. It does hurt small businesses."

While Rep. Gurtler spent a significant amount of time during the meeting responding to his countless "no" votes, he did share information on bills that he supported during the session, such as the "campus carry" gun bill.

Last year, Governor Nathan Deal vetoed the bill when it made its way to his desk due to lack of restrictions in the bill that he felt were necessary. However, Rep. Gurtler has confidence that this year the bill will leave the governor's desk with a signature due to some compromises in the bill.

Under the "campus carry" gun bill, students will be allowed to carry a gun on campus as long as the student is at least 21 years

old. However, students will not be allowed to bring the gun inside of the classroom, administrative offices and childcare facilities.

According to Rep. Gurtler, he supported this bill as an effort to give more Second Amendment rights back to citizens.

"It's really not much of a bill, but it's pushing things in the right direction," said Rep. Gurtler.

Another bill that Rep. Gurtler fully supported during the session was a bill supporting an increase of value for rural hospital tax credits. Considering the lack of large, metropolitan areas within the 8th District, Rep. Gurtler felt this bill was a no-brainer and would be nothing but beneficial to his constituents.

"This basically allows the individual to donate their funds to any rural hospital they'd like," said Rep. Gurtler. "They would get a tax credit for that. It's really good because we can help the community right here at home."

After his presentation, Rep. Gurtler took the time to answer questions from those in attendance before thanking voters for all the continuous support he has received both during his campaign and now during his first term as representative.

"Thank you for all of your support," said Rep. Gurtler. "It definitely keeps me going."

Last Thursday was one of four town hall meetings that Rep. Gurtler has held since the end of this year's state legislative session, with Towns County being his last stop. Before his meeting at YHC, Rep. Gurtler spoke at the Tea Party meeting in Union County on Tuesday, April 25.